

# The Churches of Greenwich Village

By HAROLD SETON.

THE popular misconception of the Greenwich Village section of New York city is of an entire locality given over to what the late lamented Mr. Gilbert, of the famous firm of Gilbert and Sullivan, referred to as "Greenery-gallery, Grosvenor Gallery" young men and women. Although it is happily true that many poets, painters and other artistically inclined individuals have recognized the delights of Greenwich Village as a place of residence, it is also happily true that the old established churches are thriving quite as well as the newly established tea rooms. As a matter of fact the present writer has visited both tea rooms and churches, so speaks from first hand knowledge when referring to the houses of worship.

Let us begin our brief enumeration with the charming brown stone porticoed Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist at Waverley place and West Eleventh street, perhaps because it is just around the corner from where we are rattling the keys of our typewriter, and perhaps because it is really in the very heart of Greenwich Village. The tablet over the front door bears the date 1856 and states that this building is a memorial to Bishop Wainwright, who was a noted preacher of a former generation and, incidentally, the grandfather of Marie Wainwright, the actress, who used to play young heroines but now plays society dowagers.

In Washington Square South, at the corner of Thompson Street, is the Judson Memorial Baptist Church, erected, according to the date over the door, in 1890, and sheltering under the same roof the First Lettish Church. During many years the illuminated cross on the spire was a unique feature of New York night life, and this is said to have been the first church in the country to employ such a device.

Washington Square was at one time the potter's field, and before that was the place of public execution, great crowds journeying thither from downtown to witness the hanging of criminals, whose bones were buried on the spot. As the city expanded and pressed upward, the potter's field was transferred to Union Square and later to Madison Square. (These random reminiscences are merely recorded in passing!)

The Washington Square Methodist Episcopal Church is on West Fourth street, between the Square and Sixth avenue, and now faces a row of fantastic restaurants, it obviously being but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, with the date over the portico, 1833, stands at Sixth avenue and Washington place, a substantial graystone structure, nuns and priests coming and going, along with artistic temperamentalists. John Philip Sousa owns a row of old houses in Washington place. Around the other corner in Waverley place George Middleton, the playwright, and Fola La Follette, his wife, the Sena-

tor's daughter, lunched and dined every day at Mrs. Beckwith's-in-the-Basement.

Another highly picturesque old Roman Catholic church is Our Lady of Pompeii, on Bleecker street, between Downing and Hancock streets, facing Minetta street, where the poets and painters have not quite crowded out the ragpickers. Minetta street, which turns into Minetta lane, was originally Minetta Brook, a favorite swimming and fishing place when Greenwich Village was a region of great farms and country houses, reached from Bowling Green and Wall street by lumbering stage coaches. Even when horse cars running on tracks were introduced the village remained a popular picnic ground for summer holidays.

Now the neighborhood is given over almost wholly to Italians, whose butchers, bakers and candlestick makers render the thoroughfare strangely suggestive of Naples or Palermo. On Bleecker street is the modernized edifice of the Presbyterian Bethlehem Chapel, at which services are held in English and in Italian.

In Christopher street, near Sheridan Square, with its tiny triangle of park, is St. John's Lutheran Church, with a tablet below the wooden dome giving the dates 1858-1886. The German tradesmen of the vicinity assemble here on Sundays in family groups of Teutonic appearance, if of American speech.

An interesting little house of worship is that of St. Luke's Chapel, Trinity Parish, on Hudson street, at the corner of Grove. The building is a severely simple one, but it has recently been painted a brilliant yellow, so appears much enlivened. The tablet over the entrance is almost obliterated by time. On either side and across the street are rows of very old red brick cottages, so that one could easily imagine hoop skirted ladies and stock collared gentlemen coming out to go to church.

The North Church (Baptist), with a cornerstone dated 1881, is on West Eleventh street, which, oddly enough, crosses West Fourth street, at which section once stood the Spencer homestead. This was erected, old records attest, by one Garrett Gilbert, a man about town, who later lost his money and sold the estate to Senator Marcus Spencer, whose name it retained long afterward, becoming a show place with its flower garden and fruit orchard, to say nothing of a fish pond. During the yellow fever epidemic of 1822 the house was occupied by the Post Office Department, which later moved to Asylum (now Fourth) and Bank streets. The Spencer mansion was demolished in 1872, but Dr. Hall, the Senator's son-in-law, lingered on in the neighborhood.

There is a Jewish synagogue, Congregation Sarech Amuno, at 224 West Fourth street.

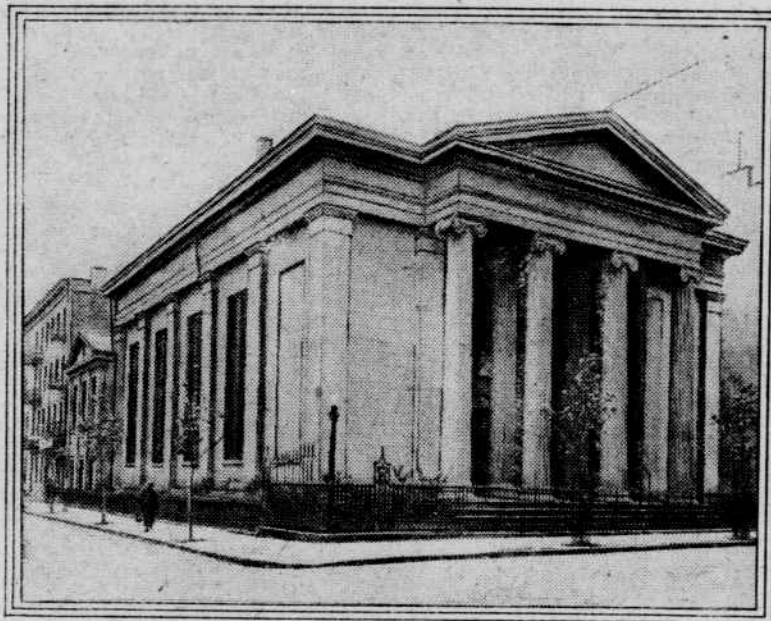
The Charles Street Presbyterian United Church is situated among old residences, and the Jane Street Methodist Church is also within the confines of Greenwich Village.

I am not certain that the three churches now named come strictly within the "Vil-

lage" classification, but I am quite positive that many "Villagers" attend the services at the First Presbyterian Church, at Fifth avenue and Eleventh street (founded in 1716); at the Church of the Ascension, now being renovated, at Fifth avenue and Tenth street (the Rev. Percy Stickney Grant,

perhaps the best known woman mural decorator in America, having adorned the Pennsylvania State House at Harrisburg and won many first prizes in competitions, has acted as First Reader in the Christian Science Church.)

As a final evidence of the keen interest



St. John Evangelist Church, Waverley place and West Eleventh street.

minister), and Church of Christ, Scientist, on West Eighth street, back of the Hotel Brevoort, between Fifth avenue and University place.

(Yes, the Artistic Temperament even acknowledges Mrs. Eddy's teachings, and in Germantown, Philadelphia, Violet Oak-

taken by poets and painters in ecclesiastical impedimenta, the other day I called at three Greenwich Village studios, in two of them observing church vestments, such as copes and stoles, and in all of them noting the odor of incense, if not the odor of sanctity!

## Mr. Lord on Newspaper Making

Reviewed by JAMES MELVIN LEE,  
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THE YOUNG MAN AND JOURNALISM. By Chester S. Lord. The Macmillan Company.

THOSE of us who in our undergraduate days earned money to pay tuition charges and board bills by acting as college correspondents for THE SUN will always remember the letters we received from its manager editor at that time, Chester S. Lord. These letters from him were so friendly in tone and so helpful in suggestions that they were preserved in many a college scrapbook. Possibly the last letter from him to be inserted was that received along about commencement time in reply to a request about the opportunities in the newspaper business. How he ever found time to go so much into detail and still see that THE SUN "caught the mails" will always remain a mystery. If he preserved the carbons of such letters, his task of writing "The Young Man and Journalism" was an easy one.

In this volume Mr. Lord chats in the same conversational style as that found in his letters. Back of his advice is thirty years of experience as managing editor of the newspaper man's paper—as THE SUN, now THE HERALD, was called. He frankly says that the sole object of his chapter chats is to tell a young man what is likely to happen to him if he goes into the newspaper business. By way of postscript he adds that his book is not intended or expected to interest or inform newspaper editors of experience.

In his first chapter Mr. Lord speaks of the reporter's first experiences and of the progress that ought to follow. Fortunately he does not omit brief mention of those unpleasant tasks which are a part of the day's work in the newspaper office. In other chapters he chats about the gathering of news and its preparation for the printer, the art of writing in simple yet entertaining fashion, not only for the news pages but also for the editorial columns, the pleasures and freedom enjoyed by foreign correspondents and—possibly most valuable of all for the beginner in newspaper work—the rewards of journalism. By way of wide measure he prints an "extra" chat about newspaper influence

in such fields as community service and service to the Government.

Attention has been called to Mr. Lord's note that the book is elementary. For that reason it is of interest not only to the young man who is making a choice of a life work but also to the lay reader who wants to know about the editing and making of a newspaper. What is needed today in American journalism is a new generation of more critical readers of the press. Of nothing is it more true than of the press than the soul of reform is the reform of the soul.

The lay reader will find Mr. Lord's remarks about New York newspapers helpful and illuminating—unless he be a reader of this paper. Possibly Mr. Lord thought that THE HERALD was not entitled to its place in THE SUN. He may, on the other hand, have refrained from praise because of modesty. But the reader who wants to know what salaries New York editors get, how much cable news costs, when "journalism" becomes "literature," where to draw the line between giving readers what they want and what they ought to have and how the newspaper has grown since its cradle days, will find satisfactory answers in the book. In matters relating to cradle days of the press Mr. Lord is not always accurate in the information given. The quotations from the *Acta Diurna* of the ancient Romans have been shown to be spurious. The printed news sheets that told of the defeat of the Spanish Armada have been proved to be forgeries. But the story of how such errors originated is too technical a tale to tell here. Mr. Lord did not trust the right news sources in these matters. He is right as to the date of the first newspaper to be printed in the English language—December 2, 1620. (The reason may be found in the book where credit is given to J. M. L.)

The test of the news value of a story is "Is it interesting?" The book meets the test. Its style—and incidentally that of the modern newspaper—is illustrated by the following quotation: "Present day writers are using whirlwind sentences and words in staccato that bit and scratch and explode."



Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square South.